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176-7808

Approved For Release 2003/09/02 : CIA-RDP80R01731R001900040001-1

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April 26, 1976

Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters,
Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency,
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Dick,

I saw in the newspapers the announcement of the completion of your tour with the Agency. I have not seen you since you took on this supremely demanding job, but like others who have known you felt comfortable that the CIA was in the best possible hands during its most trying period. I hope you leave with a well-earned sense of accomplishment. I will be interested to see what you turn to next; whatever it is, I know it will be well done.

That, really, is the main reason for this note. But the occasion brings with it a request for information. I have been collecting material for a piece on the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, intended for publication. I was in Bonn at the time, and closely involved since both the Germans and ourselves had to take into account that the Pact troop movement might not halt at the border. I was convinced then, and remain so, that the final Russian decision to go in was taken late and influenced considerably by the concurrent US withdrawal of 35,000 troops---taken by them as a clear signal of no risk.

But to do this write-up properly, I would like to refresh my memory by a look at the State Department and CIA traffic on, and analyses of, the matter at the time. What I would appreciate from you would be advice on how I might go about applying for such an authorization. I do have a current State Department security clearance based on my Stanford Research Institute consultant status; however, this project would not be under SRI auspices (unless they might want to buy it later). My intention would be to read over the classified material, make some notes, and then to submit my write-up to the Agency (and State Department) for review to see that no security problems were involved.

Any suggestions you may have would be greatly appreciated. And good luck to you for your future.

Sincerely,

Halvor O. Ecker
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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Gen Walters,

I consulted DDI, and we
cannot help Mr Ekern.

There is no basis at all
for Ekern, engaged on a private
project, to review classified
CIA traffic on the Soviet invasion
of Czechoslovakia in 1968. That
he holds a State security clearance
for a specific research project is
no basis for access to other
classified information, and Ekern
should be fully aware of that.

DDI did conduct a machine
run to see if there was any
unclassified material which
might help Ekern. Results
of the run were negative.